

Derry

Socialist Worker



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NHS WORKERS MUST FIGHT PRIVATISATION PLANS

Privatisation of cleaning, catering, laundry and other services is being introduced to Altnagelvin Hospital over the next few months as part of the Tory plan to turn the NHS into an industry that can be sold to the highest bidder.

The problems associated with privatisation can be seen from the British experience where the "contracting out" of services has been going on for some time now. In Britain, government figures show that more than one in five cleaning contracts, awarded as part of the privatisation drive, are failures. Some end up costing a lot more than the original tender. But the biggest

problem is sub-standard work which threatens hospital hygiene.

This failure to keep hospitals as clean as they need to be is not the fault of the contract cleaners' workforce. It is in all cases due to the cutback in the number of workers involved. A survey of 13 NHS cleaning contracts in Yorkshire found that, even where the contract had been won in-house, a large number of redundancies were necessary to make the tender "competitive". The resulting poor hygiene standards put patients at risk of infection, so both workers and patients suffer.

Unfortunately, the Health Serv-

*Has your little boy
got private tonsils or
public ones?*



ice unions, NUPE and COHSE, are doing little or nothing to stop the Health Board going ahead with privatisation in Altnagelvin.

An ancillary worker at the hospital told "Derry Socialist Worker" that the only action being taken was to put up posters. Canteen workers have already had their hours, but not their workload, cut in preparation for privatisation. Yet there have been no meetings called, no industrial action planned, not even a public protest has been organised.

The jobs of workers in Altnagelvin are in danger. The health,

and ultimately the lives, of those of us who depend on Altnagelvin will be endangered. Privatisation can be stopped. But only by the action of the health workers themselves. No amount of media campaigning, of petitions or lobbying of politicians will make any difference if the cleaning, catering, and other ancillary workers themselves are not willing to fight to defend their jobs.

If the union leaders aren't going to call for industrial action against privatisation, then the workers themselves will have to do so - if necessary, against the wishes of the union leaders.

BRANCH MEETINGS

TUESDAY 14 MARCH ROSA LUXEMBURG

Derry Film and Video Collective is showing "Rosa" as its contribution to International Women's Day. But the film only gives a little glimpse of the politics of Rosa Luxemburg. JOAN McKIERNAN of Belfast SWM will take a more in-depth look at the revolutionary socialist politics of Luxemburg.

NOTE: MEETING IN
UNION HALL.

SHIPQUAY STREET

TUESDAY 21 MARCH SO- CIALISM AND RELIGION

Religion is one of the most powerful ideologies in the world. It helps to keep people ground down, but it is also a great comfort to people at times of death or other crisis. How do marxists explain this, and is it possible to be a marxist and still believe in God? EAMONN McCANN tries to answer these questions.

TUESDAY 28 MARCH THE
REVOLUTIONARY PAPER
Any caricature of an SWM member would almost certainly show them with a bunch of Socialist Workers under their arm. Why is the paper so important to socialists and what is the difference between the paper of a revolutionary organisation and, say, a trade union or women's group? GORETTI HORGAN looks at the long tradition of revolutionary papers.

TUESDAY 4 APRIL THE CHANGING WORKING CLASS

The working class is dead, has been "bought off", is no longer interested in changing society. We're getting used to hearing these statements from everyone from political commentators to Labour Party leaders. LINDA MOORE of Belfast SWM examines the facts and finds that while the working class may no longer wear cloth caps we're still alive and well worldwide and - at the right time and place - willing to fight.

All meetings (except for Rosa Luxemburg) are held upstairs in the Dungle Bar, corner of Waterloo Street and High Street and start at 8.00pm.

COAGH KILLINGS SHOW NEED FOR NEW POLITICAL DIRECTION

Many Republican supporters will have seen the killing of two British soldiers on Buncrana Road on 8 March as a "good operation", and the killing of the three Protestants at Coagh the previous day as a "bad operation". But in fact the two operations had exactly the same political basis. You can't have one without the other.

The Republican Movement is nationalist. Sinn Fein's argument with the SDLP is that the SDLP doesn't honestly or adequately represent "the nationalist people". The Republican Movement takes this line because it believes that it is the "national struggle" and not the class struggle which is on the agenda at the moment.

As a result, in the North, Republican politics are based on community, not class. The IRA operates as the cutting edge of the Catholic, nationalist community. This gives the armed struggle a "sectarian" content, not in the sense of individual IRA members harbouring hatred for Protestants but in that the whole Republican perspective effectively accepts the communal basis of the politics of this sectarian state.

The IRA, in devising military strategy and tactics, will reflect and be responsive to its "own" Catholic community whose interests it tries to "represent". On occasion, that means hitting back at those it believes to have attacked the Catholic community.

This was the political basis of both the Coagh killings and the Buncrana Road operation.

In cases like Coagh, the possibility of innocent Protestants being cut down - whether as a result of a mistake or, to put it delicately, over-enthusiasm on the part of those involved - will always be present. No doubt the IRA will bend its efforts to avoid a repetition. But the real answer lies in seriously questioning the bedrock politics on which the strategy which led to the Coagh disaster was built.

We repeat that it is only by rejecting communal politics - nationalism

as a political ideology, and by appealing directly to the immediate class interests of workers of all religions and none, and by linking demands based on those interests to the ultimate goal of a united socialist Ireland that we can avoid finding ourselves in a terrible sectarian cul-de-sac again and again.

At times like the immediate aftermath of Coagh, when the establishment parties and their hangers-on are pouring abuse on Republicans, it is necessary for honest socialists to stand with the Republican Movement and against the ruling class North and South, which uses all such occasions as "justification" for tightening the screw of repression.

At the same time, we call again on Republicans who are motivated by a desire to see socialism on this island to re-examine the political ideas which inevitably lead to Coagh as well as to Buncrana Road



Johnnie Junket's Jobs Con

John Hume is off to America (again) to chat up some conference of the Boston bourgeoisie.

"My purpose is to bring jobs to Derry" he told Radio Foyle.

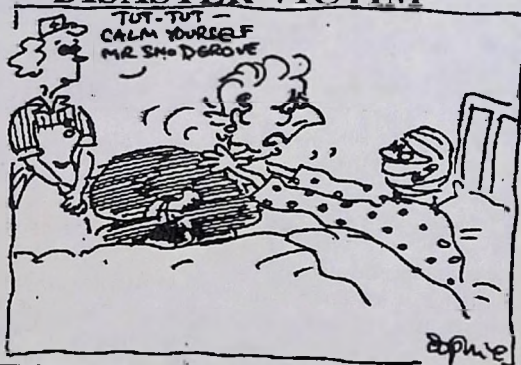
There was massive publicity about a conference in Boston last year which was supposedly going to bring jobs to Derry. The number

of jobs which have so far resulted is - nought.

Or, to put it another way, zilch. Zero. Divil a one.

Mind you, it all helps give the impression that Hume is dashing around on our behalf. And it diverts attention away from a real fight against unemployment which can only be done by fighting against the system Hume and his big-money buddies in Boston represent.

THATCHER VISITS DISASTER VICTIM



COUNCIL JOBS UNDER THREAT

Around twenty City Council jobs will be lost if the "wheelie-bin" system is introduced in Derry. This has been admitted by the Chief Technical Services Officer Victor Eakin. Yet there has been no reac-

tion either from councillors or from the local trade unions.

Eakin says that "the issue of redundancy will not arise until after the six-month pilot period". At that point "about twenty" of the 46 refuse collectors jobs will go.

He claims that there will be no compulsory redundancies, that the twenty jobs will be cut by retirements, voluntary redundancy and redeployment. Maybe so. But the end result will be the same - twenty fewer jobs available for working

class people in an area of massive unemployment.

The council workers should organise themselves now to take industrial action if necessary for the demand of "no job cuts".

And pressure should be put on councillors for support for the same demand.